

Evidence in distress – how can science reach politics?

The speakers in alphabetical order

Martin Bujard

is research director of the Family and Fertility Division at the Federal Institute for Population Research

Martin Bujard studied political science, law, economics and psychology at the University of Heidelberg (M.A.) and received his doctorate in 2010. In 2019, he attained his postdoctoral qualification in sociology at the University of Mainz. After working as a managing director, research associate in the German Bundestag and coordinator of the academy group “The future with children”, he has been working at the Federal Institute for Population Research since 2011, and as deputy director since 2020. He has held a professorship at the University of Heidelberg since 2022.

Paul Cairney

is professor of politics and public policy at the University of Stirling, UK

Paul Cairney’s research interests are in comparative public policy, policy analysis and policy theories, applied to UK and devolved government policy, and the use of evidence in policy and policymaking.

Claudia Finis

is the health policy representative for the German Society for Osteogenesis Imperfecta (brittle bone disease) Patient Association

Claudia Finis is a qualified psychologist. She currently works as a research associate at the Berlin Institute of Health at Charité in the field of registry development for people with rare diseases. She is the health policy representative for the German Society for Osteogenesis Imperfecta (DOIG) and also works there on the FAIR4Rare project, which is funded by the Innovation Fund. At the European level, she represents patients with rare bone diseases in the European Reference Network ERN-BOND and the EuRREB Registry and is a member of the advisory board of OIFE, the European umbrella organisation for people with OI.

Michael Hennrich

is managing director of Pharma Deutschland e. V.

Michael Hennrich is a lawyer and was a member of the German Bundestag until 2022. There, he played a key role in shaping pharmaceutical policy for many years, including as chairman of his parliamentary group’s health committee. In spring 2023, he became managing director of Pharma Deutschland e.V.

Johannes Hillje

is an independent political consultant

Johannes Hillje studied political communication at the London School of Economics and political science and journalism at the University of Mainz. He then gained experience in journalism and at the United Nations in New York. Today, the former campaign manager works as an independent political and communications consultant for companies, ministries, politicians and parties, and is a frequent commentator in the media.

Tanja Kuchenmüller

heads the Evidence to Policy and Impact unit at WHO

Prior to her time as unit head at WHO, Tanja Kuchenmüller led knowledge translation work at the WHO Regional Office for Europe and coordinated a unit on Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making. Before joining WHO, she worked in the HIV/AIDS field for the United Nations Development Programme and the German Development Service.

Andreas Lehr

is the managing director of the Agency for Health Policy Information, Observer

Andreas Lehr studied philosophy, theology and education. He then worked as a specialist journalist in health policy and later took the position of managing director of the Agency for Health Policy Information, which, among other things, operates the health policy information database OBSERVER. He also lectures in the Seminar for Business Administration and Health Care Management at the University of Cologne. Since 2011, he has held the title of honorary professor in the Management, Economics and Social Sciences Faculty at the University of Cologne.

Helena Ludwig-Walz

is a senior researcher at the Federal Institute for Population Research

Helena Ludwig-Walz holds a doctorate in nutritional science and studied ecotrophology at Justus Liebig University in Giessen and public health nutrition at Fulda University of Applied Sciences. In her doctoral thesis, she researched perinatal programming in the context of social and health inequality. She began her career as a research associate as well as head of the presidential office and personal advisor to the president at Fulda University of Applied Sciences. She has been working at the Federal Institute for Population Research since 2022.

Dimitra Panteli

heads the Research Hub at the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Dimitra Panteli studied medicine and public health, obtained her doctorate in public health at the Technical University of Berlin and her postdoctoral qualification in comparative health systems research. Between 2010 and 2020, she was a research associate at the Technical University of Berlin, and from 2017 onwards she also served as subject coordinator. She spent the 2016-2017 academic year as a Commonwealth Fund Harkness fellow in health care policy and practice in Washington, DC.

Eva Rehfuess

is a professor at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich

Eva Rehfuess has been teaching as a professor of public health and health services research at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) in Munich at the Institute for Medical Information Processing, Biometry and Epidemiology and at the Pettenkofer School of Public Health since 2018. Since 2015, she has also been an adjunct professor at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She completed her postdoctorate qualification in epidemiology and public health in 2014 at the Faculty of Medicine at LMU Munich. She began her academic training with a degree in biology at the University of Oxford, followed by a PhD in epidemiology and public health at Imperial College London.

Johanna Sell

heads the Health Care and Hospitals Subdivision at the Federal Ministry of Health, Berlin

Johanna Sell is a fully qualified lawyer and has been head of the Health Care and Hospitals Subdivision at the Federal Ministry of Health since 2019. In this position, she is currently playing a key role in implementing the recommendations of the government commission for a fundamental reform of both hospital remuneration and emergency care. Previously, she was deputy managing director of the Medical Review Board of the Statutory Health Insurance Funds (MDK) Bayern, where she was responsible for managing the nursing care division.

Barbara Steffens

heads the North Rhine-Westphalia regional office of TK (health insurance fund)

As head of the North Rhine-Westphalia regional office of TK (Techniker Krankenkasse), Barbara Steffens has been responsible for health policy work and contractual relationships with statutory health insurance physicians' and dentists' associations, hospitals, nursing services and hospices since 2018. She also oversees state-wide media relations. From 2010 to 2017, she served as minister of health, emancipation, care and the elderly for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and prior to that, she spent ten years as health policy spokesperson for the Green Party in the state parliament. She is also involved in the North Rhine-Westphalia health care system, including as a board member of "MedEcon Ruhr e. V" (health economics network).

Boris Velter

is the former head of the management team at the Federal Ministry of Health

Since 1997, Boris Velter has held various positions in the political arena, including from 2006 to 2009 as head of the coordination unit "Liaison between the federal government, states and the associations" in the management department of the Federal Ministry of Health under minister Ulla Schmidt. In 2013 he was state secretary in the Berlin Senate Department for Labour, Integration and Women's Issues and held the same position in the Senate Department for Health, Care and Equality from December 2016 to December 2018. In 2019, he became special representative for medicine and research to the governing mayor of Berlin. Under federal minister Karl Lauterbach, Boris Velter was head of the management team at the Federal Ministry of Health from 2021 to 2025.

Maike Voss

heads the communications and consulting agency Neues Handeln

From October 2022 to June 2024, Maike Voss was the managing director of the Centre for Planetary Health Policy (CPHP), a thinktank founded by the German Alliance on Climate Change and Health. She played a key role in the formation of the CPHP and quickly established the young thinktank as a relevant research and consulting institution. Previously, Maike Voss headed the global health governance research group at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin. Her research focuses on the governance of health within planetary boundaries, in particular the social, economic and political drivers and barriers to health promotion and prevention, as well as the interactions between health, climate change and security.